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Budget allocates \$46M for raises



PRESCOTT - For the first time in Arizona, the state's Education Endowment distributions will double next year, boosting money for teacher salaries and class size reduction, said Arizona State Treasurer Dean Martin during an interview Thursday.

The distributions will reach between \$65 million and \$70 million. School districts also may use the endowment money for teacher training, AIMS assistance, and dropout prevention programs.

In addition, the state Legislature approved the final state budget Wednesday night,

allocating \$46 million specifically for teacher pay increases. The budget designated the money for all "non-administrative personnel." The budget also specified the money is for salaries and benefits.

Martin said the endowment money and the \$46 million will be available July 1 this year.

At Prescott Unified School District, Superintendent Kevin Kapp said the \$46 million works out to about \$250,000 for his employees. In the end, his staff will receive roughly a 1-percent raise, in addition to the 3-percent raise the board granted a few months ago. He is not sure how much money PUSD will receive from the endowment distributions.

In addition, Vickie Mouland, director of business services for Chino Valley Unified School District, said she just received the numbers from the state and has yet to figure how much money Chino will receive from the \$46 million. However, she was happy the state approved extra money for teachers' salaries.

Public relations director for Humboldt Unified School District Mariela Bean said the finance department estimates her district will receive around \$250,000 for teacher pay raises, equaling an additional \$425 to \$450 for each teacher's yearly salary. Similar to PUSD and Chino Unified, the HUSD finance department does not know how much money it will receive from the endowment.

"We're the fastest growing state in the nation. (The money) is going to help. We have a tremendous need for not only teachers, but just everything that goes in the education system," Martin said. "The endowment dollars are actually much more promising, because we know we're going to be able to produce these year after year because the endowment is a very secure system."

"This is a great opportunity for local parents and teachers to engage with local school boards (on how to spend that money)," he continued.

Kapp said the board will decide how PUSD uses the endowment money. Mouland is in a similar situation. "I don't know what we'll do with it yet," she said. "If we get anything in doubling, it's good."

Kapp, Mouland, and Bean said their districts will add their shares of the \$46 million into their teachers' salaries before next school year begins.

"I think it's wonderful the Legislature is taking steps to fund education appropriately; however, I find it discouraging the administrative staff was left out," Kapp said. This is the second year in a row the Legislature allocated money for pay raises and did not include administrators.

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